



DEPARTMENT OF STATE

WASHINGTON

CONFIDENTIAL

March 30, 1964

IN REPLY REFER TO:

25X1A9a

Chief, Geographic Research
Central Intelligence Agency
Washington 25, D.C.

Dear [REDACTED] 25X1A9a

Reference is made to your letter of February 10, 1964 on the boundary between Laos and Viet-Nam.

As a result of your request, my office has made a detailed examination of the problem. The various maps, studies and reports available all bear out our original opinion that the 1:100,000 Carte de l'Indochine published by the Service Géographique de l'Indochine is the only available and reliable map series covering the boundary in question. We continue to recommend that it be used as the primary compilation source.

Certain reports have stated that, in revising the original maps of the Carte de l'Indochine as the Carte du Viet-Nam, the Service Géographique National du Viet-Nam has altered the boundary representation in several instances. While our examination has failed to uncover any example of this activity, we would nevertheless recommend the use of SGI published sheets where possible. However, if features, e.g., rivers, water divides, canals, etc. with which the boundary is associated are moved on the revised SGN du V-N sheets as a result of obviously better information, the revised sheets should take precedence over the original ones of the SGI. The Laos - Viet-Nam boundary, for the most part, follows watersheds. If the watershed is incorrectly plotted according to recent photography, the boundary should be "moved" in a new edition so as to conform with the watershed.

A problem area exists with the utilization of the 1:100,000 series. The boundary shown on sheet 136 E and 142 E does not tie in with that shown on 136 W and 142 W. In fact, 136 E does not have a boundary and the one on 142 E joins with the province boundary on the adjacent sheets. We will endeavor to determine through the Political Section of Embassy Paris or the Geographic Attaché if any light can be shed on the question.

We hope to be able to publish shortly International Boundary Study reports on this and associated boundaries. Due to the extreme sensitivity of the area, however, the problem of clearance may require additional time.

25X1A9a

Sincerely yours,

G. Etzel Pearcy
The Geographer

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